

HB258 - Heartbeat Bill Testimony - Pastor Rodney Lord, Marietta, OH - 12/4/18

Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee

Mr. Chairman and members of the Health Committee, it is an honor to be here today. I am Pastor Rodney Lord standing here as a proponent of House Bill No. 258, the Heartbeat Bill.

I have the honor to lead a coalition of pastors in Southeast Ohio, so I am speaking on their behalf as well as my own. I know that I am also quite likely a representative voice for hundreds of clergy in this state and many more tens of thousands of their church members who are very passionate about the life of the unborn.

This legislation has captured the attention, the hope and the expectation of so many because of its clear, simple message and application. I am thrilled that similar legislation is now being furthered at the federal level as well. Like thousands of others, I have stood here in this capitol and in front of the United States Supreme Court praying for a turnaround in this fight for the unborn.

I read a story a few years ago about two young brothers that underscores the significance of the life message in a powerful way. The two brothers dreamed of having their own t-shirt business. For 5 years they tried with very little success... traveling in an old van together, up and down the East Coast, going from college campuses to local businesses. Out of money, they almost gave up...until one day they decided to add these three simple words to their t-shirts..."**life is good.**" **This became the turning point.** These simple, but powerful words written on a t-shirt identified an idea, a desire, and a transcendent truth that is the very pulse in the heart of our people and birthed a 100 million dollar company called **Life is Good.**

I believe today we are at a turning point. Just as we are ending this year of 2018 into our Christmas season...a passage you will hear often is Isaiah 9:6 "*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,...*" and then this powerful phrase, "*and the government will rest upon his shoulders...*" We know that the government of God through His son brought great hope and change. Each one of you here has government on your shoulders, to lead & legislate, and to nurture and protect the life of all Ohioans. I honor and respect that great responsibility that you carry.

I have 7 children and my oldest daughter is expecting a child in March. This will be our first grandchild. About every month, we get another image of this little girl named Avery, growing into the likeness of her mother and father. We were made to be Image Bearers. When an unborn child is taken, that image is lost and so is their unique gift to us.

The reality is we are in this together. We are all facing some powerful giants causing great devastation to our families...fatherlessness, systemic poverty, the opioid crisis and yes the giant of abortion. I choose to believe there are heroes among us. My example from ancient history is a young man named David who was simply delivering lunch only to find that his nation, his God, and every life itself was under attack. His powerful words keep echoing in my soul "*Is there not a cause*" as he met and defeated the giant of his day.

I am here today because there is a great cause, life is good, and to appeal to you who have "government resting on your shoulders".